

# ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

## DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

### NEWS RELEASE



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### **2012 Kuskokwim River Salmon Fishery News Release 12**

### **Kuskokwim River Subsistence Salmon Fishing Restrictions**

This is an announcement from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game at Bethel for subsistence salmon fishermen in the Kuskokwim River Drainage.

#### **Kuskokwim River Mouth to Holitna River Mouth: Sections 1-4**

Subsistence salmon fishing is currently open to the use of gillnets with 6-inch or less mesh not exceeding 50-fathoms in length. Chinook salmon fishing with hook and line gear remains closed. Additionally, a fish wheel used to take fish must be equipped with a livebox that contains no less than 45 cubic feet of water volume while in operation. The livebox must be checked at least once every six hours while in operation and all Chinook salmon must be returned to the water alive. These regulations are to allow opportunity to harvest chum and sockeye salmon while conserving Chinook salmon.

This area is defined as, that portion of the Kuskokwim River and its tributaries upstream from a line from Apokak Slough to the southernmost tip of Eek Island to Popokamiut to a line between ADF&G regulatory markers located downstream of the Holitna River mouth. Fishing with unrestricted mesh size gillnets is only permissible in the Whitefish Lake drainage near Aniak, and 100 yards upstream from the mouth of the following non-salmon spawning tributaries: Discovery, Birch, and Swift creeks; Kinak, Kialik, and Tagayarak rivers.

## **The Holitna River mouth to the Headwaters of the Kuskokwim River: Section 5**

Subsistence salmon fishing is currently closed and fishing for non-salmon species is restricted to the use of gill nets with 4-inch or less mesh not exceeding 60-feet in length until 11:59 p.m., Sunday, July 8, 2012. Effective 12:00 a.m., Monday, July 9, 2012 subsistence salmon fishing will open to the use of gillnets with 6-inch or less mesh not exceeding 50-fathoms in length. Chinook salmon fishing with hook and line gear remains closed. Additionally, a fish wheel used to take fish must be equipped with a livebox that contains no less than 45 cubic feet of water volume while in operation. The livebox must be checked at least once every six hours while in operation and all Chinook salmon must be returned to the water alive. These regulations are to allow opportunity to harvest chum and sockeye salmon while conserving Chinook salmon.

This area is defined as that portion of the Kuskokwim River and its tributaries upstream from a line between ADF&G regulatory markers located downstream of the Holitna River mouth upstream to the headwaters of the Kuskokwim River.

### **Run Assessment**

The current Bethel Test Fishery (BTF) Catch Per Unit Effort (CPUE) indicates that there are not enough Chinook salmon to meet the 2012 Chinook salmon Management Objective (Management Objective) that was agreed upon by the Department, the Federal Inseason Manager, and was supported by the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group. The assessment of chum and sockeye salmon at the BTF indicates that there is a harvestable surplus of these species.

The Department will continue to assess the Chinook salmon run and anticipates lifting the subsistence salmon gear restrictions when it is determined that it will not adversely affect Chinook salmon escapements.

Further announcements will be made from the Bethel Fish and Game office and through local radio stations. News releases will be faxed to area villages and local fish processing companies.

### **For additional information concerning this news release:**

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